

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A documents control apparatus that can share with another documents control apparatus an attribute attached to a document, comprising:

an attribute sharing unit that shares said  
10 attribute with said other documents control apparatus;

an edit processing unit that edit processes said attribute; and

a switching unit that determines whether  
15 said attribute is shared with said other documents control apparatus by said attribute sharing unit and, based on the determination by said switching unit, controls edit processing on said attribute by said edit processing unit.

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2. The documents control apparatus as  
25 claimed in claim 1, further comprising:

an attribute identification information setting unit that sets attribute identification information of said attribute for identifying said attribute; and

5 an inhibiting unit that determines whether, if said attribute is edited by said edit processing unit, said attribute identification information setting unit needs to change said attribute identification information set for identifying said  
10 attribute, and, based on the determination by said inhibiting unit, causes said edit processing unit to not edit said attribute.

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3. The documents control apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:

an attribute identification information  
20 setting unit that sets attribute identification information of said attribute for identifying said attribute; and

a displaying unit that indicates whether the edit processing by said edit processing unit changes  
25 said attribute identification information of said

attribute.

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4. The documents control apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:

an attribute identification information setting unit that sets attribute identification information of said attribute for identifying said attribute; and

an edit processing informing unit that informs, if edit processing by said edit processing unit changes said attribute identification information of said attribute, said other documents control apparatus of information of said edit processing so that said other documents control apparatus can execute an identical edit processing on said attribute.

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5. The documents control apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:

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an attribute identification information setting unit that sets attribute identification information of said attribute for identifying said attribute;

5                    an edit history information generating unit that generates, if edit processing by said edit processing unit changes said attribute identification information of said attribute, edit history information of said edit processing; and

10                   an edit history information transmitting unit that transmits said edit history information to said other documents control apparatus.

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6. The documents control apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising an attribute identification information setting unit that sets  
20 attribute identification information of said attribute for identifying said attribute;

wherein

said edit processing unit, if edit processing by said edit processing unit that changes  
25 said attribute identification information of said

attribute is requested, prevents said attribute from changing.

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7. The documents control apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:

a documents controlling unit that controls  
10 documents;

an attribute attaching unit that attaches  
said attribute to each document controlled by said  
documents controlling unit, said attribute including  
an item type, a name of said item type, and an item  
15 type value;

an item type defining unit that assigns one  
or more item types to said attribute attached to each  
document by said attribute attaching unit;

a name attaching unit that attaches a name  
20 to said item type defined by said item type defining  
unit; and

a document copying unit that copies said  
document to said other documents control apparatus.

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8. The documents control apparatus as  
claimed in claim 7, further comprising an attribute  
storing unit that stores said attribute, said item  
type, the name of said item type, and said item type  
5 value.

10 9. The documents control apparatus as  
claimed in claim 8, wherein said edit processing unit  
retrieves and edits said attribute, said item type,  
the name of said item type, and said item value  
stored in said attribute storing unit.

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10. The documents control apparatus as  
20 claimed in claim 8, wherein said attribute attaching  
unit correlates said document controlled by said  
documents controlling unit with an attribute  
retrieved from said attribute storing unit.

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11. The documents control apparatus as claimed in claim 10, wherein said document controlling unit stores said document and said correlated attribute.

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12. The documents control apparatus as claimed in claim 5, further comprising a document attribute edit history storing unit that, when said edit processing changes said attribute identification information of said attribute, stores said edit history information of said edit processing.

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13. The documents control apparatus as claimed in claim 8, wherein said attribute storing unit further stores information indicating reference to said attribute, said item type, the name of said item type, and said item value.

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14. The documents control apparatus as claimed in claim 8, wherein said attribute storing unit further stores information related to an item included in said attribute.

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15. The documents control apparatus as claimed in claim 14, wherein said attribute storing unit further stores information indicating correlation between said item included in said attribute and location in which said item is stored.

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16. The documents control apparatus as claimed in claim 7, further comprising an analysis processing unit that retrieves said documents from said documents controlling unit and analyzes said retrieved documents based on designated condition.

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17. The documents control apparatus as  
claimed in claim 1, further comprising an attribute  
shared by said attribute sharing unit with said other  
documents control apparatus, the attribute including  
5 information for identifying said other documents  
control apparatus.

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18. A documents control system, comprising  
a plurality of documents control apparatuses  
connected via a network, each documents control  
apparatus being as claimed in claim 1.

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19. A computer readable recording medium,  
20 storing a computer program that causes a computer to  
function as:

an attribute sharing unit that shares an  
attribute with another documents control apparatus;  
and

25 an edit processing unit that switches,

depending on whether said attribute sharing unit  
shares said attribute with said other documents  
control apparatus, edit processing on said attribute.

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20. A method of controlling an attribute of  
a document comprising the steps of:

10           receiving a request for edit processing on  
an attribute;

             determining whether said attribute is shared  
among a plurality of documents control apparatuses  
and, if so shared, whether said edit processing  
15       changes attribute identification information of said  
attribute; and

             switching over, if said attribute is shared  
among the plurality of documents control apparatuses  
and said edit processing changes attribute  
20       identification information of said attribute, said  
edit processing to an edit processing that does not  
change said attribute identification information.